

BPA  
PUBLISHED

VOL 01 ISSUE 29



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$x^2 + x - 1 = 0$

$\sqrt{81}$

$3\frac{1}{5}$

ABC

90



## Afterschool activities: Finding the balance

**A**fter school activities are a vital part of any child's educational experience. If there is no balance these extra activities can be a recipe for burn out. Beat Sommer is the head of the Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai (SISD) and he has these wise words on the subject:

"After-school activities provide a channel for reinforcing the lessons learned in the classroom, offering students the opportunity to apply academic skills in a real context: Mad Science, programming, robotics, 3D printing and languages, are all ways of reinforcing lessons learned in the classroom. Beyond this, introducing students to wider disciplines helps them to get a better grasp of the ever-evolving world we live in; a world vastly different from the one their grandparents grew up in. Sports are also an extension of what you do in Physical Education (PE) classes and the key to providing a well-rounded education. In addition, physical activity increases brain function and concentration levels, which leads to higher grades.

"Having non-scholastic interests is an asset when applying for university or jobs and shows admissions officers and employers that an individual is well-rounded and responsible.

"Participating in activities outside of formal study also imparts a sense of community, responsibility and inclusion, and is valuable in teaching time management and how to prioritise. After-school activities are also critical to helping children develop strong interpersonal skills, and those who do more than just study often tend to have greater confidence and higher self-esteem.

"We know the goal shouldn't just be to foster academic success alone - as the proverb says 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' - but equally students should be supported to develop their unique passions, interests and strengths."

### How can you help your child choose the right extra curricular activity for them?

"Some children have many interests and want to do 'everything'. This is a good opportunity for us to teach them how to make choices. Ask your children why they want to do a particular activity rather than another one. Make them reflect on what each activity will bring them."

"It is important to have a mix of activities, which develop different skills - physical, intellectual, artistic, creative, etc.

"It is essential that children are motivated to do what they are doing. Some children actually don't want to do activities. Forcing them would be counter-productive. It can be a better choice to let them do less or even nothing. Their classmates, telling them how much fun they have in their activities will convince them more easily.

"Focus on what your child is naturally good at. A creative child will be enjoying arts and craft or dancing, a hyper-active child will need to play intense sports, an intellectual child will be tempted with activities such as Mad Science, robotics or chess.

"If it is not imposed, if it is accepted by a child, an after school activity such as drama or musical theatre will also help a shy child to open up and be more comfortable in public."

### How can you strike a balance and ensure that your child is not overloaded?

"It is important to be aware of how tired your child is. Speak, listen for feedback and communicate with your child to understand how they are feeling. Look at his/her eyes, body language.

"As long as your child is motivated and wants to do an activity, let them do it. It is better to do a few activities with quality than many with poor quality.

"Make sure they are enjoying every activity they are doing.

"Parents are often tempted to have their children try everything and do everything. Be patient. There is plenty of time over the course of childhood and adolescence to learn different things."



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